Partnering With the Media

to build support for onsite wastewater management

Barry Tonning
Tetra Tech

The key to successful outreach is targeting your message to a specific audience and having it respond to your message.


WAL★MART
SUPERCENTER
FOOD CENTER
Butternut

Why “do” outreach?

- Build awareness of the issues and processes for resolving them
- Educate stakeholders on options regarding what needs to be done.
- Motivate individuals to take action.

Water Lines Special Insert

The beast in the backyard

New guidelines focus on how states and owners can better manage septic systems

By Barry Tonning, Senior Project Manager, Tetra Tech Inc. Reprinted with permission from the February 2001 issue of State Government News, a publication of the Council of State Governments

Late last summer, nearly 800 people who attended the Washington County Fair in New York became ill. Dozens were hospitalized and two died. Telephone surveys conducted in the weeks after the outbreak indicated that between 2,800 and 5,000 attendees might have developed gastrointestinal illness.

What caused this massive disease outbreak? Researchers at the New York Department of Health strongly suspect that a septic sys-

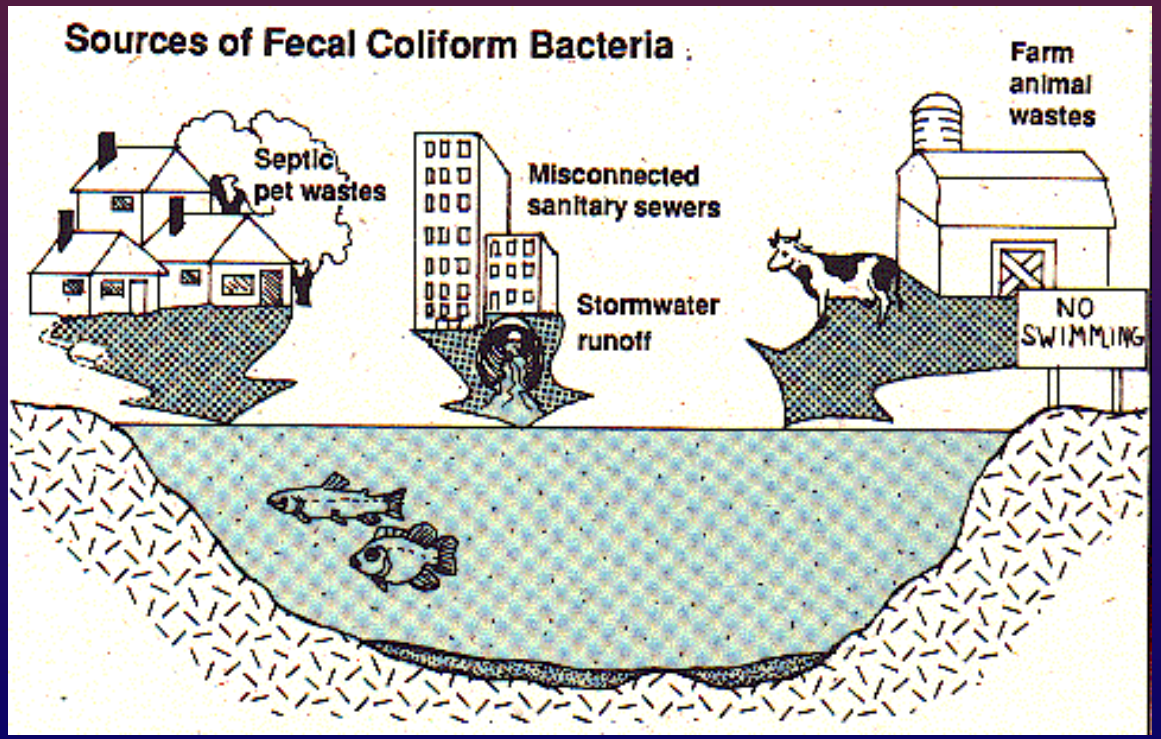
lines for Management of Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems,” which was the subject of a notice published in the *Federal Register* on October 6, outlines a series of five management tiers in the form of model programs. Septic-system oversight agencies in areas with few problems and relatively low risk to water resources may opt for a simpler, less comprehensive approach, while those with higher system densities and threatened waters may wish to adopt a more pro-

What can outreach accomplish?

- Raise awareness of problems
- Inform people on regulatory requirements
- Circulate info on technologies
- Discuss management options
- Point out issues re: buying a home
- Remind owners to have tanks pumped
- Examine water quality trends
- Recognize outstanding service providers
- Support groups working on key issues
- Etc.

Objectives

- Objectives define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-sensitive outcomes targeted at:
  - Awareness
  - Education
  - Action



Target Audience

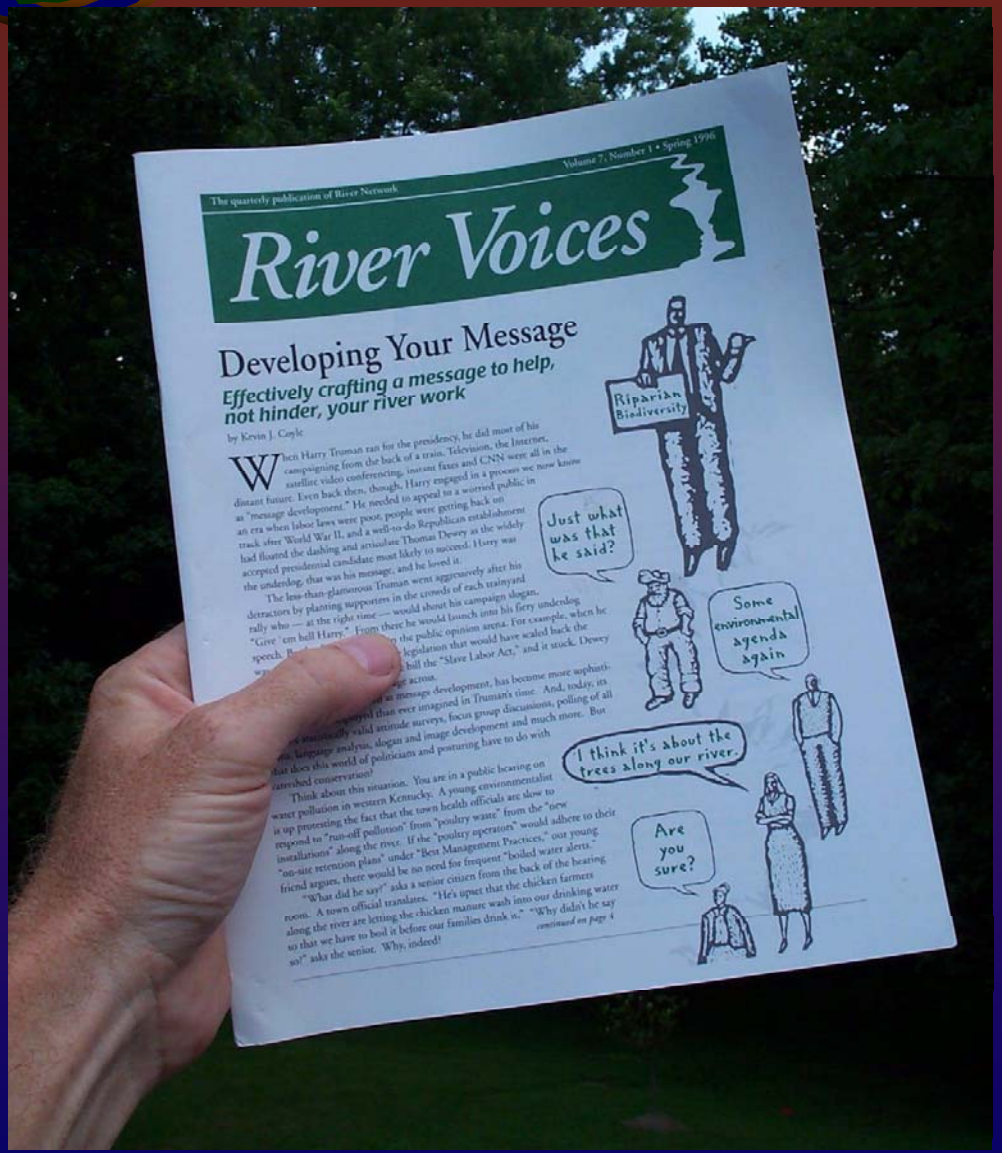
Target audiences are different!

Target audience

- Research the target audience
  - Focus groups
  - Phone interviews
  - Pre/post surveys
  - Public agencies
  - Community leaders
  - Census bureau
  - Trade associations

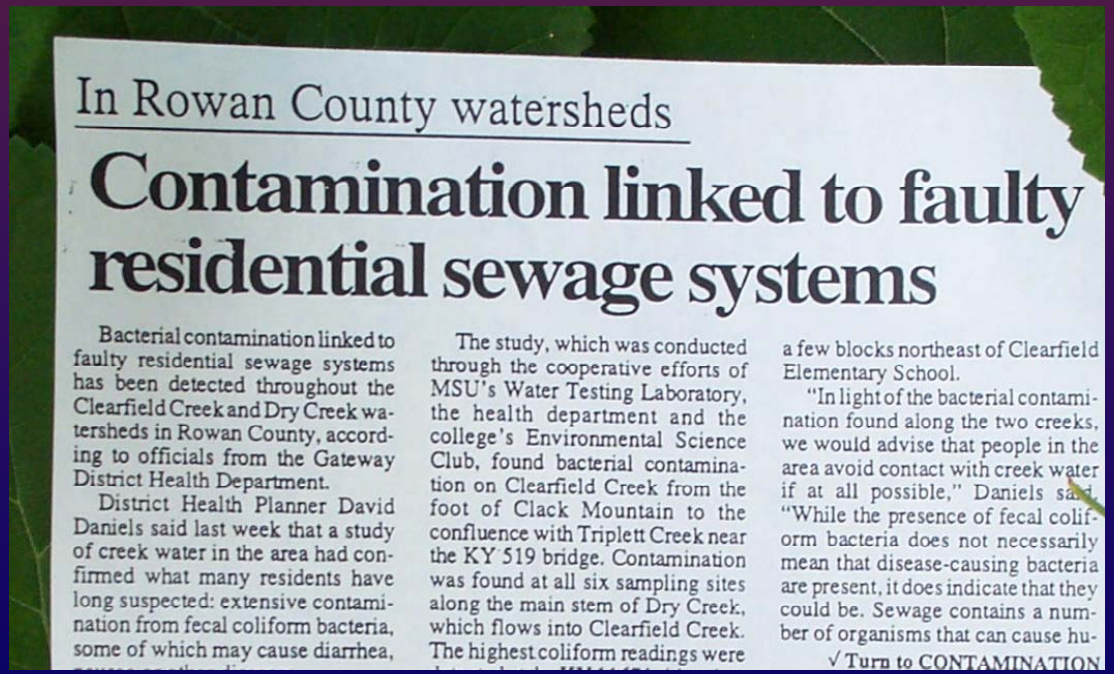
Message

“!”


The quarterly publication of River Network
Volume 7, Number 1 • Spring 1996
River Voices
Developing Your Message
Effectively crafting a message to help, not hinder, your river work
by Kevin J. Coyle
When Harry Truman ran for the presidency, he did most of his campaigning from the back of a train. Television, the Internet, satellite video conferencing, instant faxes and CNN were all in the distant future. Even back then, though, Harry engaged in a process we now know as "message development." He needed to appeal to a worried public in an era when labor laws were poor, people were getting back on track after World War II, and a well-to-do Republican establishment had floated the dashing and articulate Thomas Dewey as the widely accepted presidential candidate most likely to succeed. Harry was the underdog, that was his message, and he loved it.
The less-than-glamorous Truman went aggravatedly after his detractors by planting supporters in the crowds of each trainyard rally who — at the right time — would shout his campaign slogan, "Give 'em hell Harry." From there he would launch into his fiery underdog speech. [illegible] on the public opinion arena. For example, when he [illegible] legislation that would have scaled back the [illegible] bill the "Slave Labor Act," and it stuck. Dewey [illegible] across.
[illegible] message development, has become more sophisticated than ever imagined in Truman's time. And, today, its [illegible] analysis, slogan and image development and much more. But [illegible] statistically valid attitude surveys, focus group discussions, polling of all that does this world of politicians and posturing have to do with watershed conservation?
Think about this situation. You are in a public hearing on water pollution in western Kentucky. A young environmentalist is up protesting the fact that the town health officials are slow to respond to "run-off pollution" from "poultry waste" from the "new installations" along the river. If the "poultry operators" would adhere to their "on-site retention plans" under "Best Management Practices," our young friend argues, there would be no need for frequent "boiled water alerts."
"What did he say?" asks a senior citizen from the back of the hearing room. A town official translates, "He's upset that the chicken farmers along the river are letting the chicken manure wash into our drinking water so that we have to boil it before our families drink it." "Why didn't he say so?" asks the senior. Why, indeed!
continued on page 4
Riparian Biodiversity
Just what was that he said?
Some environmental agenda again
I think it's about the trees along our river.
Are you sure?

Message

- Specific to target audience
- Should have benefit to target audience
  - Improves/protects resources
  - Costs less
  - Improves health
  - It's convenient
  - It's free
  - It's the law



In Rowan County watersheds

Contamination linked to faulty residential sewage systems

Bacterial contamination linked to faulty residential sewage systems has been detected throughout the Clearfield Creek and Dry Creek watersheds in Rowan County, according to officials from the Gateway District Health Department.

District Health Planner David Daniels said last week that a study of creek water in the area had confirmed what many residents have long suspected: extensive contamination from fecal coliform bacteria, some of which may cause diarrhea,

The study, which was conducted through the cooperative efforts of MSU's Water Testing Laboratory, the health department and the college's Environmental Science Club, found bacterial contamination on Clearfield Creek from the foot of Clack Mountain to the confluence with Triplett Creek near the KY 519 bridge. Contamination was found at all six sampling sites along the main stem of Dry Creek, which flows into Clearfield Creek. The highest coliform readings were

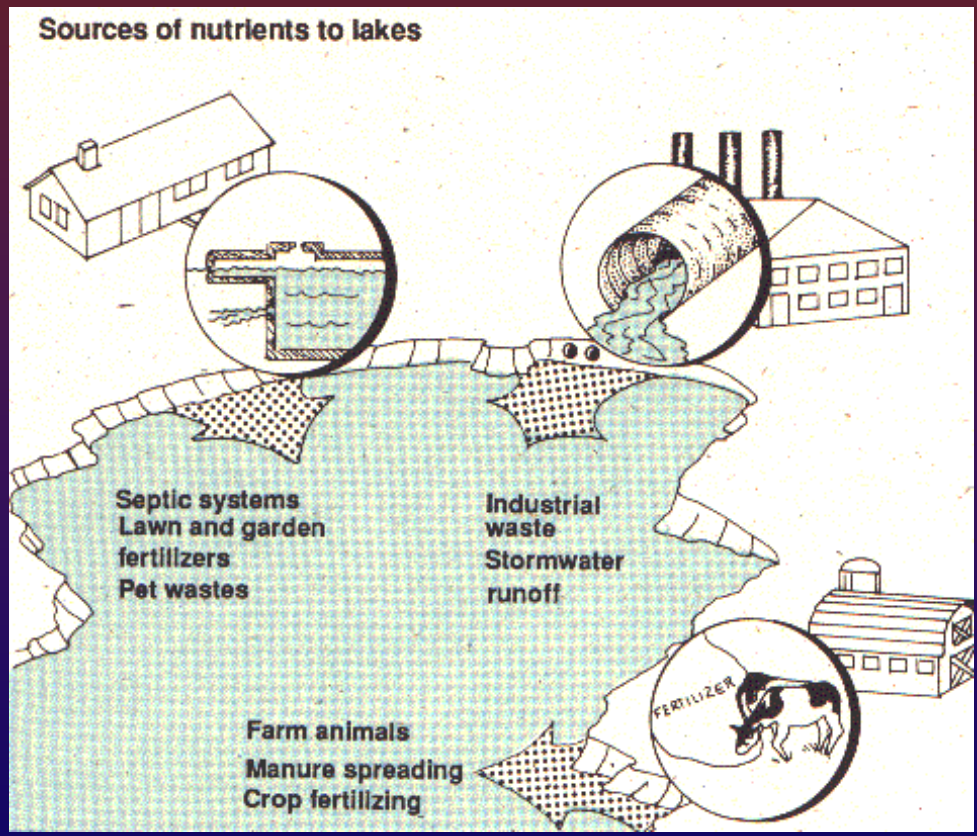
a few blocks northeast of Clearfield Elementary School.

"In light of the bacterial contamination found along the two creeks, we would advise that people in the area avoid contact with creek water if at all possible," Daniels said. "While the presence of fecal coliform bacteria does not necessarily mean that disease-causing bacteria are present, it does indicate that they could be. Sewage contains a number of organisms that can cause hu-

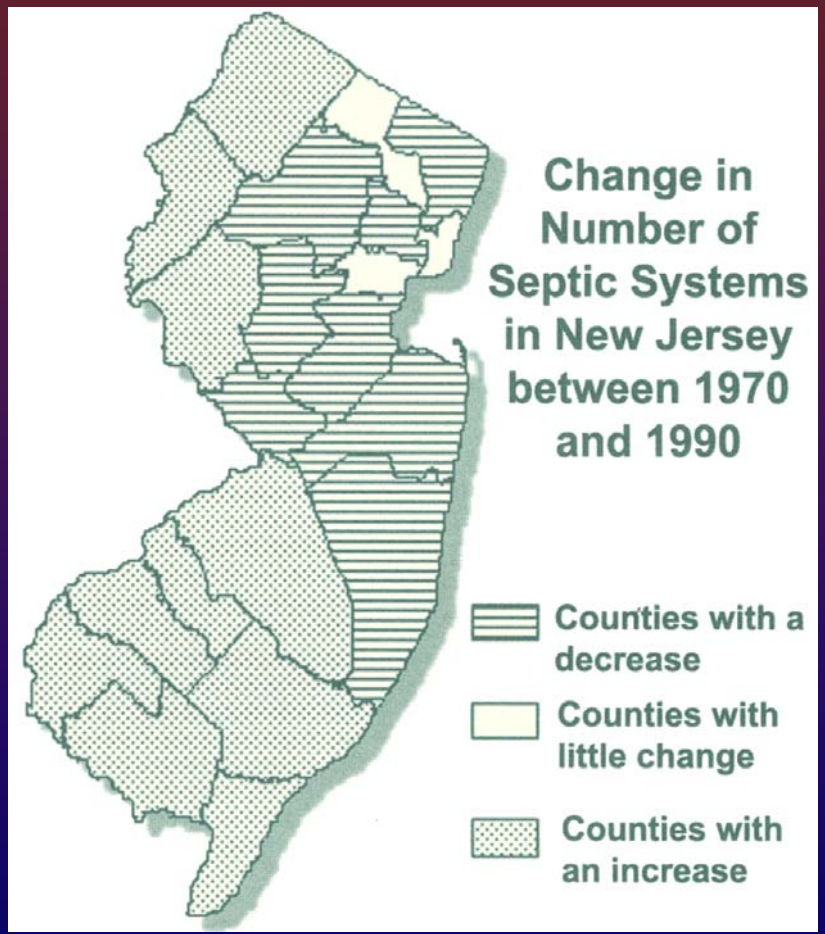
√ Turn to CONTAMINATION

Message development rules

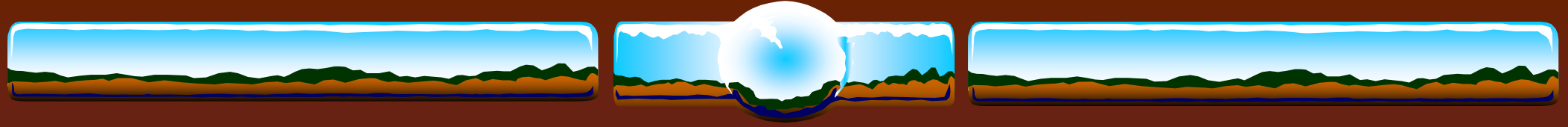
- The teenagers rule
  - you must be able to explain the issue or problem to a group of teenagers
- The people rule
  - people concerns (drinking water, recreation, stewardship, etc.) outrank biological values or “ecosystem” issues



Message development rules



- The solutions rule
  - identify and discuss problems, but give people hope that viable solutions exist
  - talk about specific management practices or technologies that can address the problems
  - identify practices that have been implemented locally or regionally to deal with similar problems

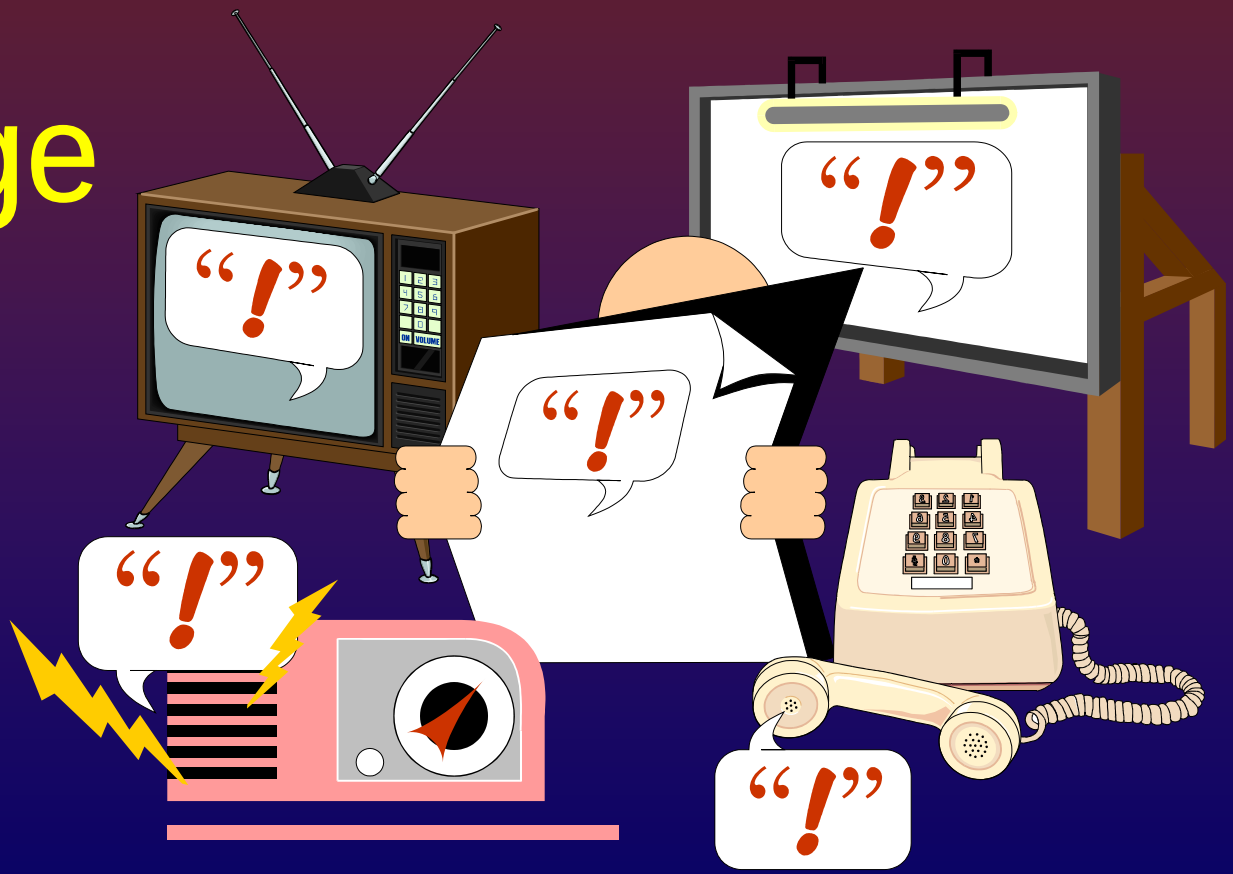


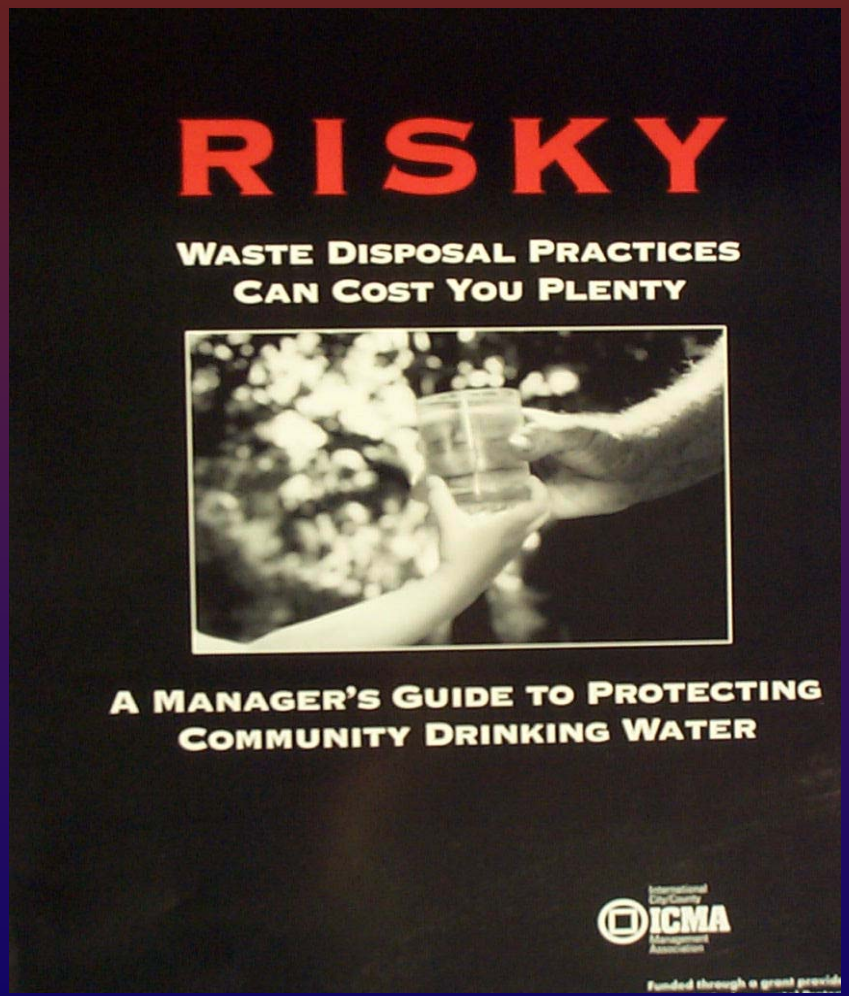
Message development rules

- The words rule:

Cold and prickly	*Warm and fuzzy*
Preservation	Conservation
T&E species zone	Wildlife habitat
Regulations	Safeguards
Development restrictions	Local controls
Managed growth	Responsible development

Format: Displaying the Message




RISKY
WASTE DISPOSAL PRACTICES
CAN COST YOU PLENTY
A MANAGER'S GUIDE TO PROTECTING
COMMUNITY DRINKING WATER
ICMA


Pumper
For the Good of the Order
2001 Contractor of the Year
EXPO


Coastal 09
Zone
Splash!

Format: Displaying the Message

Print	"Stuff"	Events
Newsletters	Calendars	Festivals
Fact sheets	Magnets	Clean-ups
Flyers	Bumper stickers	Demonstrations
Magazine articles	Tote bags	Storm drain stenciling
Posters, displays	Frisbees	Monitor training
Billboards	Lapel pins	Mini-courses
Transit cards	Stickers	Seminars

Format: displaying the message

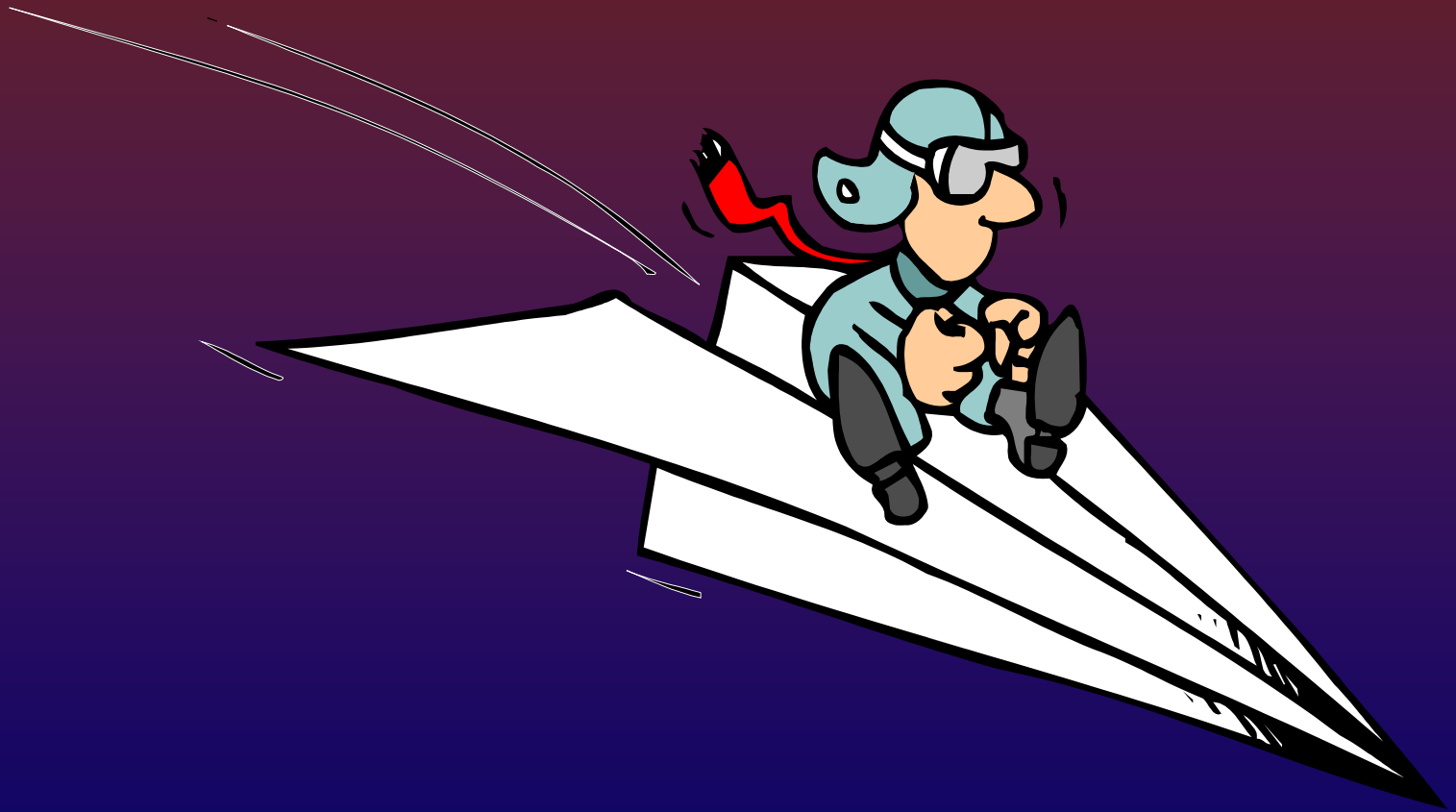
News media

- Radio
- Newspaper
- Television
- Magazines

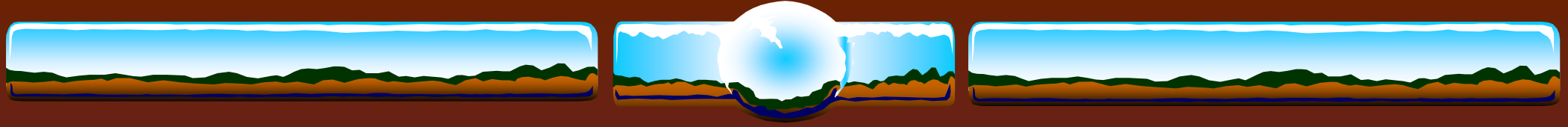
Electronic media

- Listservers
- Web sites, links
- CD-ROMs

Distribution



Who’s your messenger?



Distribution

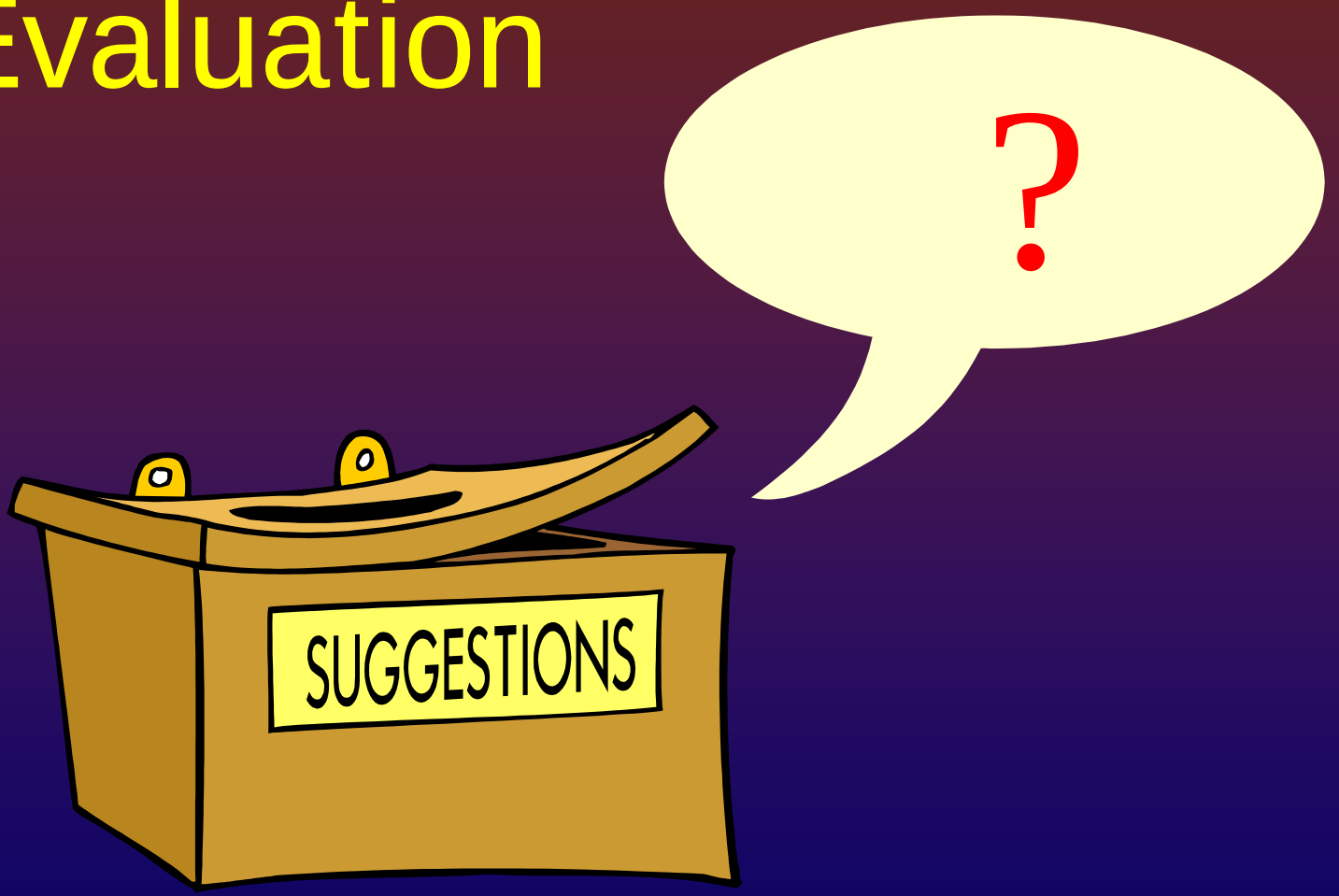
Delivering the message . . .

- Mail
- Phone
- Door-to-door
- Events
- Presentations
- Piggybacking
- Media
- Stakeholder-stakeholder
- Conferences/workshops
- Targeted businesses

Distribution

- Media: options . . .
  - Press releases for events, conferences
  - Feature articles
  - Editorials and letters
  - Monthly columns
  - Talk shows

Evaluation



Evaluation

- 3 kinds of evaluation:
  - Planning – will the plan achieve the objectives?
  - Process – are tasks assigned, resources adequate?
  - Impact – did our message resonate with the target audience? Did we achieve our objectives?

Partnering with the news media

What makes the news?

Good news stories:

- Have a local angle
- Address significant issues
- Are unique and interesting
- Affect many people
- Focus on a celebrity
- Sometimes involve controversy . . .

Officials will discuss creek contamination

Officials from the Gateway District Health Department and Gateway Region Environmental Education Network will meet with residents of the Clearfield Creek and Dry Creek watershed areas at 7 p.m. tonight in the Clearfield Elementary School cafeteria.

The meeting is to discuss recent water testing that shows the creeks so contaminated with bacteria from human waste that health officials are recommending people avoid contact with creek water, and update residents on the schedule for public sewer service in the area.

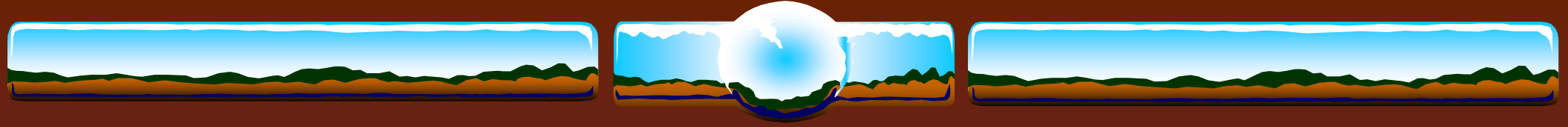
The officials will also ask those attending from the neighborhoods if they think a clean-up effort is needed to rid the creeks of junk, trash and other waste.

According to officials from the Gateway District Health Department, bacterial contamination throughout the Clearfield Creek and Dry Creek watersheds in Rowan County is linked to faulty residential

What's important to the public when it comes to water quality?

- Public health issues
- Drinking water supplies
- Stewardship responsibilities
- Recreation/tourism impacts

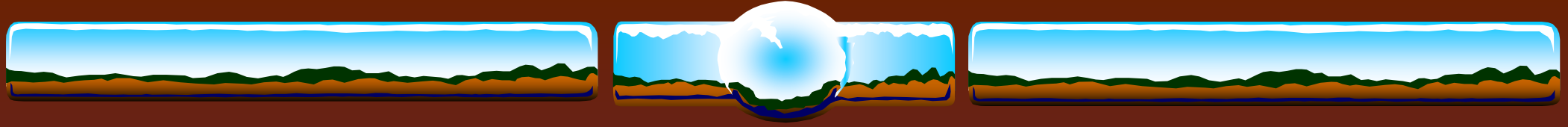
Source: McKnight Foundation



Where does the public get its information on water issues?

- Local television news 47%
- Local newspapers 27%
- Radio news programs 18%
- Friends, family, neighbors 4%
- Environmental mailings 2%
- Community leaders 1%

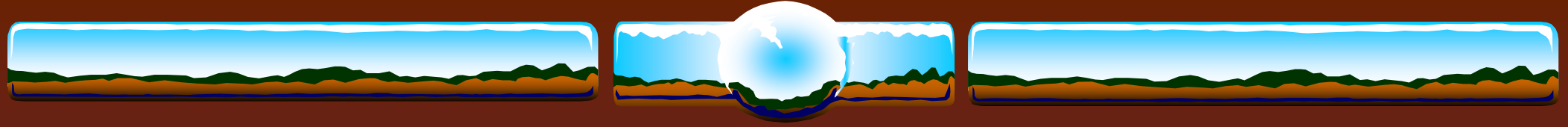
Source: Lake Research Inc; for the Upper Mississippi Basin



Ohio EPA Study

- Have received OEPA pubs at home/work 21%
- Know individuals working for OEPA 10%
- Attended OEPA public meetings 4%
- Heard an OEPA speaker 13%
- Read the daily newspaper 71%
- Watch local TV news 78%
- Listen to news on the radio 55%

Source: OSU Extension, 1998



Tualatin River Basin Study

Sources of water quality information:

- Newspapers 67%
- Television 43%
- Word-of-mouth 18%
- Radio 14%
- Brochures 10%

Why is water quality improving?

- Public awareness 45%
- Regulations 33%
- WW treatment 27%

Source: Riley Research Associates 1997

Most effective source of info?

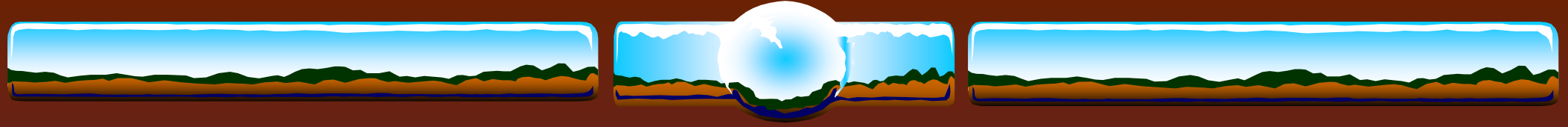
Newspapers	29%
Television	19%
Newsletters	8%
Word-of-mouth	8%
Brochures	5%
Bill insert	3%
School materials	3%
Signs	3%
Radio, meetings, events	1%

Source: Tualatin River Basin Study, Riley Research Associates 1997

Who's the most believable?

- Local daily or weekly newspapers 22%
- Local television news 12%
- Department of Natural Resources 10%
- Magazines 10%
- DNR printed materials 9%
- Family and friends 8%
- Commercial ag dealers 6%
- County conservation staff 6%
- County extension agent 4%

Source: University of Wisconsin, 1998



"If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes, you don't exist."

Daniel Schorr
News Analyst
National Public Radio

Why use the media?

- It's effective
  - people get their news from the news media
- It's available
  - the space between the ads must be filled
- It's free!
  - you buy the ads but the news is free!

Ezel Elementary students get first-hand knowledge about wastewater treatment methods during a tour of the school's "package plant."

5-Week Study Unit

Ezel Students Get Help In Study Unit On Water

"Package Plants," recognized as mini-sewage treatment plants in areas where municipal systems aren't available, have historically been an Achilles heel to folks in the sewage treatment business. These plants require daily attention from licensed operators and can be effective only if proper care is administered.

Ezel Elementary School is one of 10 public schools in the Gateway Area District that have package plants designed to take care of wastewater and recently, nearly 200 students at the school completed a unit of study on water.

The five-week program concluded on Dec. 18 with an outdoor classroom activity at the school's package wastewater treatment plant.

All teachers and each class from kindergarten to fifth grade participated in the program. Classroom presentations covered groundwater, surface water, and wastewater treatment and disposal.

The effort was coordinated by the Gateway Region Environment-Education Network (GRE-EN) and several resource professionals participated in the program. The included—

Eric Cullum and April Height, Morehead State University students; Mason Manning, Ezel School maintenance; Donny Center, U.S. Forest Service Job Corps; Dale Clary, Hemingsburg Wastewater

Treatment Plant Manager; Alice Rudd, Ezel Elementary Food Service Director; Nellie Buchanan, Morgan County 4-H Agent, and Nancy Cooper, Environmentalist with the Gateway District Health Department.

The quarterly publication of River Network

Volume 5, Number 3/Fall 1994

River Voices

Media Matters

by Randy Showstack, American Rivers

Why Media Exposure is Vital to Your River Work

When you are fighting to save a river, media outreach is a critical tool and one of the basic resources to include in your group's overall efforts. No matter how big your opponent is, media outreach will help you. David felled Goliath with a slingshot. With the media—and by firing off "guerrilla" media tactics like passion, integrity, chutzpah, and a sense of what makes news—you can win on your issues, and gain other significant benefits for your organization.

The media—television, newspapers, radio, and magazines primarily—will increase your clout and

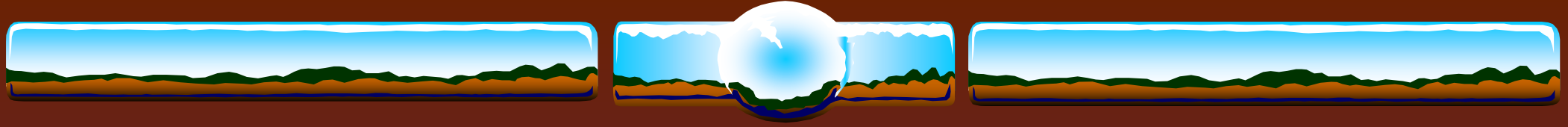
photo by Pete Lavigne

MRWC's "Source to the Sea" canoe expedition from headwaters to the ocean gains widespread media attention. From l to r Bob Varney, NH Dept. of Environmental Services; Dan Grossman, radio journalist; Ralph Goodno MRWC executive director.

in other areas is exceptional, your group and issues may be invisible to the public, and you may be losing to an adversary who is media savvy. Learning to work with the media is not difficult, and if you are involved with lobbying, fundraising or public speaking, you already have some key skills that can be transferred to this new arena.

Wisdom from the Field

you can't buy the media. People are smart enough to realize that the slick public relation campaigns that are produced by PR agencies are not necessarily the truth." He cites as an example a breakthrough that came for the Coalition after three members offered a simple, flip-chart presentation to the *Portland* (ME) *Press Herald* editorial board. He says that although a PR firm had tried to convince the paper



How to do the news

- Initiating coverage:
  - builds awareness of organization & its role
  - informs and educates the public
  - motivates and reinforces staff, supporters
  - introduces and frames debate on issues
- Responding to coverage:
  - provides feedback, sets the record straight
  - gives local angle to regional/national issue

Constructed wetlands offer alternative to septic systems

The latest technology in residential sewage treatment is slowly spreading throughout the Gateway Region, as county health departments begin to allow permits for constructed wetland septic systems.

Environmental inspectors from the Gateway District Health Department have written permits for the new plant/rock wastewater filter systems in Rowan and Morgan counties, and the first system in Bath County was installed last week near Preston.

Interest is also high in Menifee and Montgomery counties. According to health department officials. The first permits for systems in those counties are expected soon.

Wetland treatment systems make use of the vast water purification capabilities of plants like cattails, reeds, canna lilies, sweet flag, arrowhead, ferns and various brushes and grasses, in a carefully designed system which focuses on cleaning up rather than just diffusing it underground.

"Constructed wetlands have been permitted in other parts of the state for the past few years," said Barry Tonning of the district health department's water pollution staff, "but a state moratorium was issued three years ago so inspectors could monitor the existing systems to make sure they worked. They found out that they could work very well, and our permit writers here in the Gateway District are really excited about the potential for this area."

Health environmentalist Nancy Cooper, who permits septic systems in Morgan and Menifee counties, said the wetland systems, "give people a chance for effective wastewater treatment in areas where the traditional leach-bed systems might not be feasible."

Gateway environmental health director Sally Purvis noted that high water tables, soils and slopes in the five-county region "make it difficult to site leach-field systems in many areas." These limiting factors lead to "backed-up systems, sewage standing in yards, and that unmistakable smell that lets everyone around know the system is failing." Purvis said.

Deborah Thomas, who permits systems in Rowan County, said, "Carefully selected plants in the shallow, rock-filled beds remove contaminants from sewage wastewater, while oxygen from the air feeds bacteria that breaks down organic pollutants."

Constructed wetlands systems have a septic tank to trap solids (which settle out) and scum/grease (which floats on top), just like conventional systems. But the similarities end there. Traditional systems seek to diffuse the clarified sewage effluent from the tank by allowing it to soak into underground trenches filled with golf-ball sized rock. The entire system is anaerobic, meaning it is without oxygen so there is no air contact to feed oxygen to the bacterial decomposers naturally found in sewage. Chances for contamination of underground water tables—and wells—are high, due to the presence of possibly harmful coliform bacteria in the leachate soaking down toward the water table.

RECORD

(Continued from Page 3A)

Robert Arnold Skaggs. Petition for dissolution of marriage.

Katherun Ann Beatty vs. James Daniel Beatty Jr. Custody case.

Jerry Davis Webb vs. Regina Carol Webb. Petition for dissolution of marriage.

Trail.

David and Linda Baker to Frank and Ruby Risner, tracts on Kentucky Highway 11.

Roger A. and Beulah M. Wilson to George L. and Dora C. Pawley, property in Country Heights.

E. Caswell and Lucy Taylor Prewitt

Aged to *perfection*

Seniority Section

Dan Houston, 69, works out

Wildcats outclaw Aussie All-Stars

Sports, Page 5K

Scott Padgett works for his shot

The Kentucky Post

Edition of The Cincinnati Post | © THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1998 | 50 Cents

Licking's pollution surprising

By Monica Dias
Post staff reporter

Ken Cooke expected the Licking River to be dirty.

He didn't expect more than half of 37 samples of river and creek water taken by volunteers after a rainfall this summer to show high levels of bacteria from animal and human waste — or that the highest levels of pollution would be found in rural areas.

"I was ready for some high numbers," said Cooke, volunteer support coordinator

Please see LICKING, 3K

Foul waters

Volunteer testers who checked the Licking River and its tributaries found high concentrations of fecal coliform, indicating sewage or runoff contaminated by manure. Coliform concentration is measured in colonies per milliliter. To be safe for swimming, the concentration should be below 200. Testers found concentrations hundreds of times higher at several locations after a heavy rain. Among the highest:

FORK	COUNTY	LOCATION	FECAL COLIFORM
Main	Harrison	Quiet Trails	130,000
Main	Harrison	Claysville	60,000
South	Pendleton	Hayes Station Road	45,000
Main	Kenton	Covington, 26th St.	35,000
Main	Pendleton	U.S. 27	11,000
Main	Campbell	Mouth	4,700

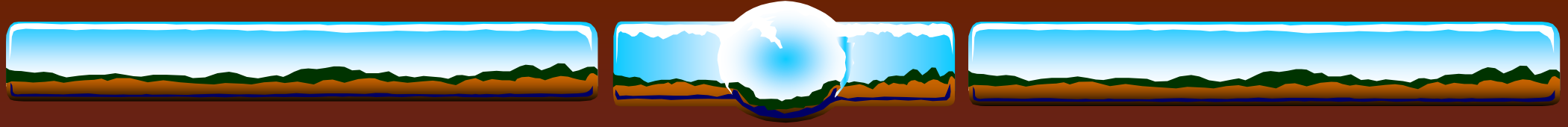
Oars stirred the quiet surface of the Licking River Wednesday. But what's beneath the surface is what worries scientists and volunteers.

Kentucky

Elfers

Everything you ever wanted to know about reporters

- They always have deadlines
- Most aren’t trained in the sciences
- They’re very curious people
- New information is their lifeblood
- They don’t like runarounds
- Their suspicion is aroused by secrecy

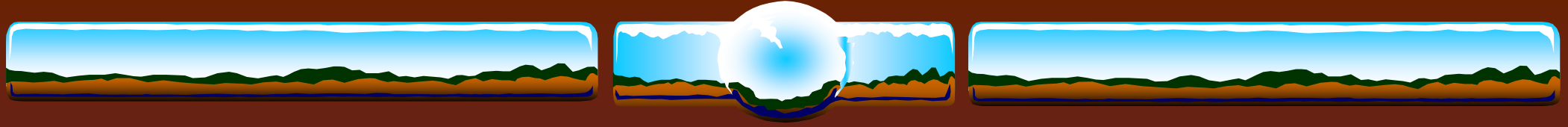


Tips for working with reporters

- Establish a relationship beforehand
- Think like Clark Kent or Lois Lane
- Return calls, respect deadlines
- Be open and accessible
- Provide appropriate background info
- Be proactive rather than reactive
- Provide feedback on coverage

Interview tips

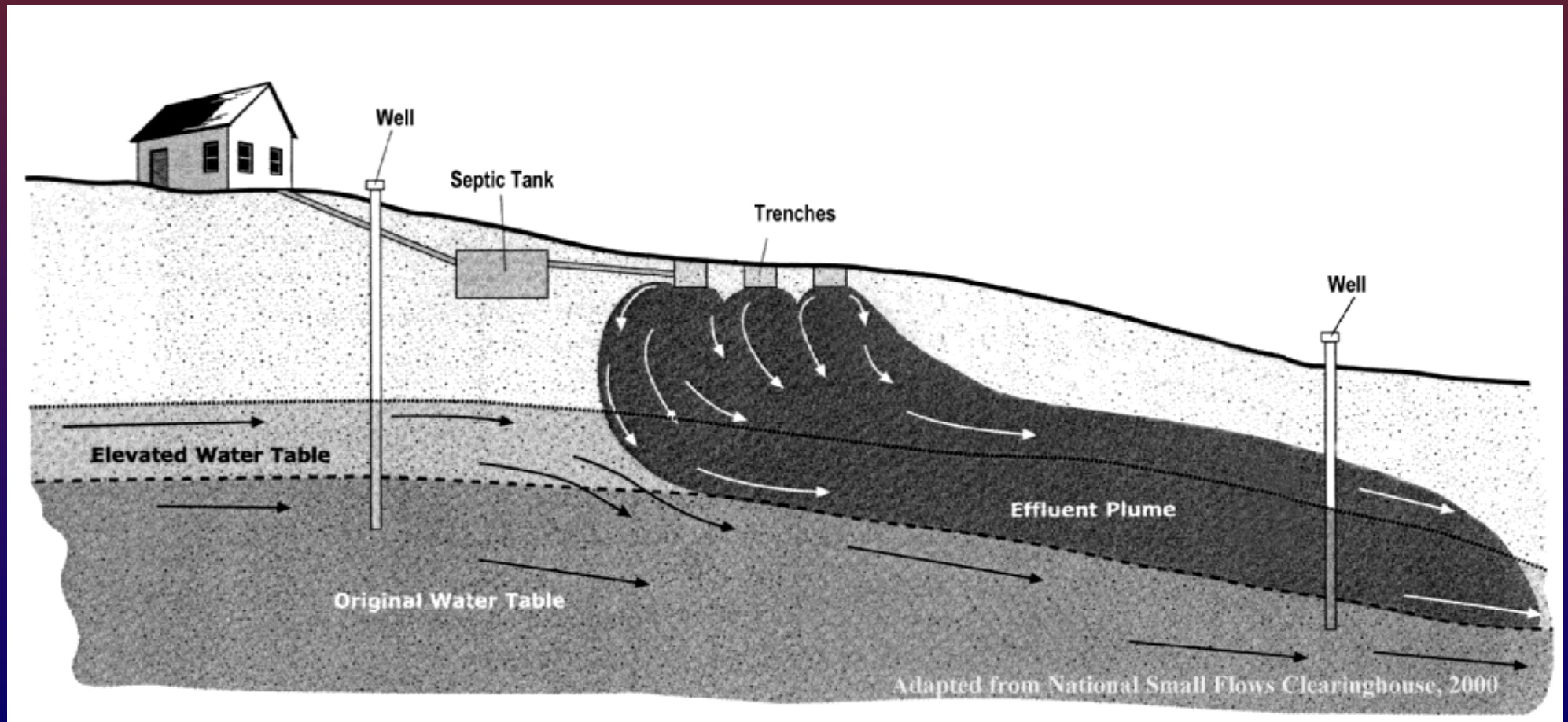
- Preparation is key!
  - find out why they're calling
  - ask about the deadline
  - conduct background research
  - identify your key message
  - return the call before the deadline

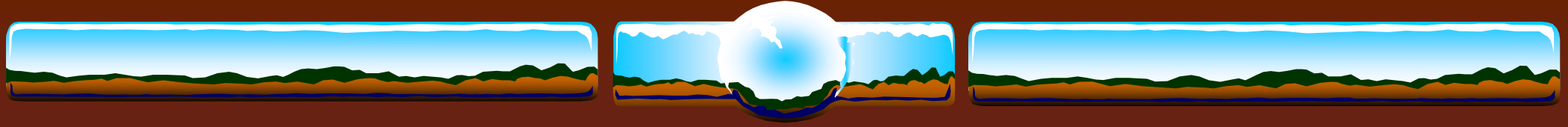


News conferences

- Develop a plan
  - subject, speakers, location, time, date, invitees, materials needed
- Provide background materials
  - news release, issue backgrounder, graphics, quotes, interview subjects
- Conduct follow-up activities
  - contact no-shows, respond to coverage

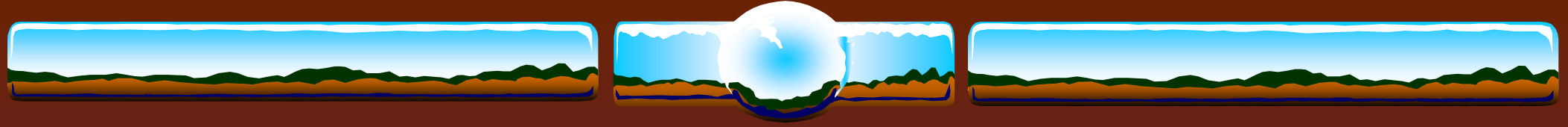
If you've got graphics, use them!





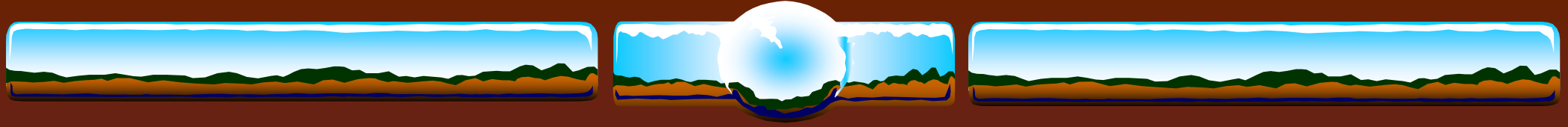
Working with the news media

- Welcome the opportunity to comment
- Take time to collect your thoughts
- Avoid criticizing your critics
- Refrain from passing judgement
- Treat all reporters/media equally
- Explain regulatory or scientific issues
- Keep communication pathways open



Partnering with the news media

- Build a relationship with the news staff
- Learn the “news” perspective (local, significant, affects many people, controversial)
- Educate reporters on science issues
- Foster public debate of public issues
- Be clear, concise and consistent
- Know what’s off-limits; avoid off-the-record comments



Remember . . .

- Don’t play favorites, always be honest.
- Always assume you’re on the record.
- Never pick a fight with anyone who buys their ink by the barrel . . .
- Freedom of the press applies only to those who own one!!


TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1993
THE MOREHEAD NE
Public awareness increases about wetlands septic systems
The latest technology in residential sewage treatment is slowly spreading throughout the Gateway Region, as county health departments begin to allow permits for constructed wetland septic systems.
Environmental inspectors from the Gateway District Health Department have written permits for the new plant/rock wastewater filter systems in Rowan and Morgan counties, and the first system in Bath County was installed last week near Preston. Interest is also high in Menifee and Montgomery counties, according to health department officials, with the first permits for systems in those counties expected soon.
Wetland treatment systems make use of the vast water purification capabilities of plants like cattails, reeks, canna lilies, sweet flag, arrowhead, ferns and various rushes and grasses, in a carefully designed system which focuses on cleaning up sewage effluent rather than just diffusing it underground.
Constructed wetlands have
permitted in other parts
state for the past few
said Barry Tonning of
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water pollution staff,
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writers here in the
District are really
the potential for
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in Morgan and
and scum/grease (which floats on top), just like conventional systems. But the similarities end there. Traditional systems seek to diffuse the clarified sewage effluent from the tank by allowing it to soak into underground trenches filled with golf-ball sized rock. The entire system is anaerobic ("without oxygen"); there is no air contact to feed oxygen to the bacterial decomposers naturally found in sewage. Chances for contaminating underground water tables - and wells - are high, due to the presence of possibly harmful coliform bacteria in the leachate soaking down toward the water table.
Wetland systems feature one or two shallow lagoon beds beyond the septic tank, where effluent is allowed contact with oxygen-rich air and the roots of plants thirsty to take up nutrients and pollutants from the wastewater. The plant/rock filter bed - a depression about a foot deep, four to eight feet wide and 40 to 90 feet long - is lined with a 20 to 40 mil thick plastic sheet, to prevent contamination of soils and aquifers beneath the bed.
The nearly level beds are filled with marble- to golf ball-sized rocks, and plants noted for their filtering and purification qualities are transplanted into the bed. Some homeowners opt to develop their wetland areas as showy flower beds, complete with ornamentals, landscape timbers, and plenty of blossoming plants. Bath County greenhouse operator Sharon Hemmingson designed the plantings for the Phillip Razor system near Preston from her Pine Grove Road nursery.
Health environmentalist Ted Withrow, who permitted and designed the Razor's system, said the cost of constructed wetland systems "is very competitive with traditional systems, especially if the homeowner is willing to do some of the work."
Wetland systems are adaptable to a wide variety of site conditions, Withrow said, and can be developed in a series of beds on the contour for sites with slopes too great for traditional systems.
added. Perso
the systems ca
county health depa
more details.
Wetland treat
nologies are also being used
livestock producers looking for a way to clean up animal manure and liquid wastes before they wash into creeks and streams. Federal and state soil and water conservation agencies have been promoting the systems as an option for producers with the right "lay of the land" near their livestock facilities. Farmers interested in the systems should contact the ASCS or SCS office for details, or can call GREEN at 1-800-677-6396.